

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

COUNTRY USSR

SUBJECT    The Port of Baku

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1. The port of Baku is located on the northern end of Baku Bay along the southern coast of the Apsheronkiy Peninsula. The entire waterfront of the town of Baku is equipped with piers, beginning with the northern pier (in the region of the ship repair and building factory imeni Vano Sturua) and ending with the piers on the eastern boundary of the White Town. However, the majority of piers belong to the Kasptanker Company and are used only for handling petroleum ships. The dry cargo port of Baku lies mainly between the piers which are located in the central part of the town, from Morskoi Boulevard (pier #14) to the Black Town (pier #28). All piers in the port are built of wood in such a fashion that ships moored to them are perpendicular to the shore. Besides wooden piers there is one stone pier to which railroad tracks run.
2. The approaches to the port are not considered very difficult. Ships approach from the sea, using as orientation points the light ships Amburanskiy, Shoulanskiy, and Apsheronkiy located on the Apsheronkiy Peninsula; the Zhiliy on the island of Zhiloi; and the Marginskiy located on Margin Island. Besides light ships, ships get their direction from the light and horn buoys which are found in large numbers along the coast of the Apsheronkiy Peninsula and in Baku Bay.
3. In the port the water is deep enough to handle ships of any draft. The port of Baku does not freeze in the wintertime. If there is any ice, it is very thin and always melts after one or two days. The maximum water temperature in Baku Bay is 26 to 27 degrees centigrade and is reached in July.
4. The prevailing winds are as follows: Winter . . . northeast, sharp and cold; Summer . . . northeast and also southwest, weak and moist. Maximum wind force is 10 to 12 points, and is reached in the months of September, October, November, March, April, and May. In the USSR Baku is known as the windy city, and actually it deserves this title. Winds blow almost constantly in Baku. The roofs of the houses in the town, as a rule, are made flat and in one piece, in order to keep the wind from ruining them.

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5. Living and working conditions in this town are better than in Astrakhan. Up until World War II there were several difficulties arising from the strong expression of nationalistic elements among the local Azerbaijan population. However, beginning with the end of 1942, this element of the population in the town decreased and the number of Russians increased significantly. In the majority of important posts of the government, the Azerbaijanians were replaced by Russians. [redacted] and by conversations with many inhabitants of the town, there have no evidences of nationalistic elements in the past few years, and as a result there have been no repressive measures by the government as the Azerbaijan element is dying out. A great deal of mixture has taken place in that locality. The Azerbaijan men marry Russian women quite freely, and vice versa. The predominating population in the town is therefore a mixture of Russian and Azerbaijan. Not many Azerbaijanians work in the seaport because they do not take to that type of work easily.
6. Supply of foodstuffs and products which are widely used is fairly good. In Baku the workers and servants, especially the latter, are paid well. There is sufficient transportation and electric, water, and gas supply of the town are in good condition. Sanitary and hygienic conditions are good, if one does not count the smell of petroleum products and the great amount of soot from the factories, especially in the region of the Black Town. The city is well-supplied with cultural and entertainment establishments including: theaters, movies, clubs, museums, a well-equipped swimming pool, stadiums, and playgrounds. There are several good culture and rest parks. There is also the Azerbaijan Government University and a series of other institutions of higher learning.
7. The cargo turnover in Baku is reckoned by the quantity of freight processed in and shipped out of the port, and the quantity processed in and arriving in the port. The cargo turnover of the port for 1951 was planned at 2.7 million tons. This cargo turnover consisted of 1.6 million tons of freight shipped out of Baku and 1.1 million tons shipped into Baku. Actually, however, the cargo turnover was quite a bit higher, due to the working coefficient. For 1951 the working coefficient for Baku was planned at 1.75. However, it is not very likely that this working coefficient was carried out. I would estimate that in 1951 the administration of the port could not keep the working coefficient any lower than 1.85 - 1.90. The cargo turnover plan for Baku for 1951 was as follows:

Type of Cargo	Quantity of Cargo Leaving Port in Millions of Tons	Quantity of Cargo Entering Port in Millions of Tons	Increase in Mass of Working on Account of Working Coefficients by Variants	
			Railroad-Pier-Ship	Ship-Pier-Railroad
Cotton	---	0.2	---	0.2
Machines & Equipment	0.5	---	0.5	---
Timber	---	0.3	---	0.3
Minerals	---	0.2	---	0.2
Salt	---	0.4	---	0.4
Grain	0.7	---	0.7	---
Provisions	0.2	---	0.2	---
Water	0.2	---	---	---
Total	1.6	1.1	1.4	1.1

Thus, the gross mass of freight handled in Baku in 1951 was 2.7 plus 2.5 times 0.75 = 2.5 plus 1.9 = 4.6 million tons; 0.75 being the coefficient for the direct variant "railroad-ship" or "ship-railroad" through the transloading of cargo. This somewhat increased accounting of gross mass of cargo turnover was taken because water was one of the items shipped into the port and it is not counted in the figuring of the cargo working coefficient.

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8. The work in the port of Baku, as in all other ports in the USSR, is organized in accordance with orders of the Ministry of the Merchant Fleet with instructions governing organization of loading-unloading work, determination of norms governing the period of time to be spent by ships in port, and organization of wages for stevedores and machine operators. The port of Baku maintains relations with all ports on the Caspian Sea, but mostly with Astrakhan and Krasnovodsk. Work organization in Baku resembles that of Krasnovodsk in many ways but work in Baku is quite a bit worse than in Krasnovodsk. If the port of Krasnovodsk between the years 1948-1951 sharply increased its work and constantly overfulfilled the cargo turnover plans, the port of Baku, on the other hand, during recent years has constantly become worse, and there have been many instances where the port has been unable to fulfill its monthly quotas for freight handling.
9. Like Krasnovodsk, Baku has two production areas. One area specializes principally in the handling of grain, minerals, and other loose cargo, the other specializes in the handling of the remaining cargo and the passenger traffic. In the port there are 40 to 50 brigades of stevedores, with about 12 to 15 men each, and numbering altogether 600 - 700 men. These stevedores usually surpass their norms by 250% and their earnings (piece-progressive system) are fairly high, up to 1,500 and even 1,800 rubles a month.
10. There is very little difference in the degree of mechanization in Baku as compared with that in Krasnovodsk. The types and capacities of the machines used in Baku are similar to those used in Krasnovodsk, the only difference being in the number of machines used. The port of Baku has the following machines: Portal cranes; Derricks, Greyfer cranes (2 or 3); Automobile cranes (several). These cranes are predominately electric and Diesel. The port is also equipped with stationary conveyors and transporters, including disc conveyors; 100-ton wagon scales; portable conveyors designed after the Krasnovodsk drum-type scraper used for handling grain in the ship holds; automatic loaders of 1.5- and 1.8-ton capacity for handling piece cargo, (it was recommended, in order to make the work easier, that the port be equipped with auto loaders of 0.5-ton capacity for work inside the freight cars with piece cargo) several (10 - 12) narrow-gauge pulling machines for work inside the port, model Tma-3 1950; electric cars for intra-port transportation, 2-ton capacity each; motor truck and land transport. The automotive transport is carried out by motor trucks type GAZ-AA, ZIS-5, GAZ-51, ZIS-150.
11. In spite of the fact that the port is fairly well equipped with loading-unloading and transportation machinery, the mechanization of the loading-unloading work in the port is quite a bit lower than in Krasnovodsk. In Krasnovodsk in 1950, 95% of all freight was machine handled, while in Baku in the same year 80% - 85% was machine handled. This development can be explained only by poor management and inability to get maximum results from the machinery at hand. No question concerning this matter was brought up either in the Ministry of the Merchant Fleet or among the members of the Production-Economic Board. In the meantime, no improvement has been noticed in the port.
12. The port of Baku was nationalized by a directive of the government in February 1918 (as was Krasnovodsk and the entire merchant fleet of the country). Until 1923, the port was under Kaspar, but since 1923 it has been independent. In charge of the port are the chief and his assistants: the chief engineer and assistant in charge of exploitation. In the port are the following sections:

Exploitation Section;  
 Commercial Section;  
 Mechanical-Ship Section;  
 Mechanization Section;  
 Communications Section;  
 Planning Section;  
 Labor and Wage Section;  
 Bookkeeping Section;  
 Finance Section;  
 Personnel Section;  
 Military Mobilization Section;  
 Capital Construction Section;  
 Repair-Building Section;  
 Communal Dwelling Section;  
 Supply Section;  
 Administrative-Economic Section;  
 Port Captain and Navigation Section;

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Motor Transport Pool;  
Transporter Pool;  
Repair Shops;  
Loading-Unloading Section of the First and Second Areas;  
Freight Warehouses of the First and Second Areas;  
Mechanization Sections of the First and Second Areas;  
Passenger Terminal;  
Coastal Boatwains and Coastal Sailors.

13. The movement of secret documents in the port is carried out by the Secret-Code Section of Kaspflot. Political work is handled by the Political Section of Kaspflot. Personnel training is done by the Training Combination of Kasptanter. Fire and guard work is handled by the Sea Section of the VOSHR, which is directly subordinate to the Central Section of Military Protection of the Ministry of the Merchant Fleet. No reconstruction of the port or structural changes have been mentioned, either in the Ministry of the Merchant Fleet or in the government, nor are any expected to take place in the near future.

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